

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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1. The Venezuelan Constituent Assembly, which convened on 9 January 1953, with a precarious quorum of 71 Deputies, only one over the required 70, is being strengthened by elected members of the recalcitrant opposition parties, Union Republicana Democratica (URD) and Comite de Organizacion Politica Electoral Independiente (COPEI). Since convening, six additional Deputies have been sworn in, bringing the total as of 23 January 1953 to 77. The trend will continue, as two more Deputies are to be sworn in later in the week of 26 January, and more are expected as the session progresses.
2. No elected principals of opposition parties have presented themselves, their parties claiming that the elections were fraudulent. All the opposition delegates thus far sworn in are substitutes. For the most part they are second-rate citizens and of no national significance, attracted more by the liberal emoluments which the representation offers than by any civic motives or political convictions.
3. One exceptional case of an opposition delegate's publicly resigning is that of Ali Dagar APARICIO, substitute delegate of the Estado de Miranda, who did so with a blast against the leaders of his COPEI party. He accused the party of "lending support in tacit form to the Venezuelan Communists." He stated he will maintain an independent position, without compromising with any political party, and will continue to defend the fundamental principles of Christian-Socialism. "I consider," he said in a statement to the press, "the moment is one for initiative and constructive action and not for demagoguery and disassociation, which have characterized the conduct of some of the leaders, who seem more interested in being heard and applauded publicly." He evidently was referring to the petition to the government by COPEI before the opening of the Assembly that sessions of the Assembly be broadcast by radio, and speeches and happenings in the Assembly be publicized in the press in full and without censorship. The petition was refused.
4. He continued, "I have come to the Constituent Assembly because I have been elected by the people to defend their interests and because I resent the fact

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that my party is playing the game with the extreme left-wingers, as they have proven by abstaining from answering the call of their electors; and by the fact that I am a Catholic and a man of order I am inclined towards the policy of the present government, which favors the religious creed of the majority of the Venezuelans, who are attacked by the Communists, who unfortunately have the support in tacit form of the COPEI party."

5. The Assembly has approved the Constitutional Project in toto and is currently proceeding with discussion of the Articles, one by one. The Constitution must be disposed of before 19 April 1953, the date for the convening of the new Congress. After the Constitution is adopted, the Assembly will nominate members for the new Congress. It is estimated that 40 Senators and approximately 105 Deputies will be elected. Election of Deputies will be based on a ratio of 1 to 25,000 population.
6. On convening, the Congress is expected to elect Col. Marcos PEREZ Jimenez as Constitutional President of Venezuela for a five-year term. Subsequently, presidential elections will be by direct secret ballot.

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